



PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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MAY CROP PRODUCTION

WEST VIRGINIA -- On farm hay stocks, as of May 1, 2006, totaled 214,000 tons. This is 2,000 tons more than what was on hand last year at this time, and 23,000 tons above May 1 stocks on hand in 2004. The disappearance of all hay stocks on farms from December 1, 2005 - May 1, 2006, was 770,000 tons, 6 percent less than the 2004 crop disappearance of 818,000 tons for the same period.

Final 2005 burley tobacco production totaled 680,000 pounds, down 1.01 million pounds or 60 percent from 2004. Yield per acre averaged 1,700 pounds, up 400 pounds from 2004. Area harvested in 2005 totaled 400 acres, down 900 acres from the previous year. The 2005 season average price for tobacco was \$1.550 per pound, down from the 2004 price of \$1.970. The value of production totaled \$1.05 million, down 68 percent from the 2004 value of \$3.33 million.

UNITED STATES -- Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.32 billion bushels, down 12 percent from 2005. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 42.4 bushels per acre, 2.0 bushels less than last year. Grain area totals 31.2 million acres, down 8 percent from last season.

All on farm hay stocks on May 1, 2006 totaled 21.3 million tons, down 23 percent from the previous year. Disappearance of hay from December 1, 2005 - May 1, 2006, totaled 83.7 million tons, 3 percent less than the disappearance of 86.8 million tons for the same period a year earlier.

Thirty-six of the 48 reporting States had lower May 1 hay stocks than a year ago. Hay stocks in most of these States were also below year ago levels for December 1 which resulted in the lower May 1 stocks. Drought conditions during the summer months of 2005 in the central Corn Belt and southern Great Plains States resulted in increased supplemental feeding of hay, reducing the December 1 stocks. The largest decreases in May 1 stocks compared with last year occurred in Texas and Missouri, where drought conditions continued through the winter and this spring. As a result of the drought, pasture growth has been stunted and cattle producers have been forced to continue heavy feeding from already short hay supplies. Many producers in Texas began purchasing hay from other States in February.

Hay stocks increased from last year across the northern Great Plains and upper Mississippi Valley States. Montana, Minnesota, and North Dakota showed the largest increases, as all three States experienced mild winter conditions that reduced the amount of supplemental feeding required. Additionally, hay production during 2005 was a record high in Montana and the second highest on record in North Dakota, which significantly contributed to the high volume of hay stocks in those States.

U.S. tobacco production for 2005 is revised up 1 percent from the January preliminary estimate. Harvested acreage is virtually unchanged, while the average yield increased 24 pounds per acre. Total production, at 647 million pounds, is down 27 percent from 2004. Growers harvested 298,080 acres in 2005, down 27 percent from the previous year and the lowest harvested acreage on record. Acreage of the 2005 crop was heavily impacted by the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004 which eliminated the tobacco quota program and price supports. **Burley** production, which accounted for 99 percent of all light air-cured tobacco, is revised up 4 percent from the January preliminary estimate of 195 million pounds. At 203 million pounds, this is 30 percent below 2004 when 292 million pounds were produced. Producers of burley tobacco harvested 100,150 acres in 2005, down 35 percent from the previous year. Yields averaged 2,031 pounds per acre, 123 pounds greater than 2004. Kentucky, the leading producer of burley tobacco, produced 144 million pounds, 71 percent of all burley grown in the United States.

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